





THE CONVOCATION

AND

THE CROWN IN COUNCIL:

A Second Letter to an Anglican Friend.

BY

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MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have carefully read, so far as I could find them, all the answers which have been made to the letter I addressed to you three months ago. About six or seven have appeared in newspapers or reviews, but I have not found in them more than two points which seem to me to require any comment.

The one is the statement that I have failed to distinguish between the Church and the Establishment, and that I have charged upon the Church of England what attaches only to its legal and secular manifestation. Whether this be true or probable we shall see hereafter.

The other is a complaint that I have spoken with bitterness, and with, I think some one wrote, 'a savage joy,' of the confusions of the Anglican system. Now, on this point I will say at once that I am not conscious of it, and that if I had done so I should be sorry for it. I had the sincerest desire to speak with moderation and with kindness. I feel no temptation to be bitter or unkind, I hope, towards anyone, still less towards so many old and dear friends, for whom,

though we seldom or never meet, I cherish a true affection. Moreover, I am no believer in the efficacy of controversial asperities; and in my last letter I studiously erased every word which I thought could give needless displeasure. And I asked of a friend to read and to weigh what I had written with the same view. The facts I had to state were in themselves severe, and I endeavoured to follow the known rule, *τὰ σκληρὰ μαλθακῶς*. Accept this as an assurance of my intention both in the last letter and in this. I cannot soften what in its simplest enunciation is hard: I ought not if I could, for truth must be told truthfully; in charity, but in sincerity. If I have failed in charity, point out the word to me; I will make with joy the amplest reparation, though for a fault which I had no intention to commit. In truth, my habitual desire and daily prayer for you all is, that you may be released from the bondage in which I also once was held. But I know that even this will grate upon some ears which are unused to plain speaking, and who resent even a charitable desire for their fuller illumination as an offence against their superior light and their actual perfection.

In my last letter I said that the Church of England had not repudiated either the Gorham judgment or the 'Essays and Reviews;' that Convocation had met and pronounced on many things, but on this had passed no sentence. I must now modify this statement. What I said of the Gorham judgment is still true; but the 'Essays and Reviews' have been con-

demned by the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury. Perhaps no event could better illustrate the argument of my last letter. You will remember I asked, 'If the Convocation should pronounce even unanimously on any doctrine, who could receive its judgment as infallible?' or, I may say, as divinely certain, or as final, or as superseding the Privy Council, or as reversing its sentence? We have now this supposition put to the test. I will not in any way diminish the importance of the condemnation by pointing out that the Upper House was equally divided, and that the condemnation passed only by the casting vote of Archbishop Longley; nor by referring to the opposition of a large minority, maintained for two or three days in the Lower House, as an evidence of the doubtfulness of the condemnation. Let me put it at the highest, as an undoubted and authoritative rejection by the Church of England in Convocation of the book and its heresies. We will assume then, for the purpose of argument, that the Church of England has spoken. Will any one modify the opinion he has hitherto entertained of the 'Essays and Reviews' because of this judgment? For instance, will the readers and followers of the 'Essays and Reviews' give up the book as unsound? Will those who have learned to disbelieve the inspiration of parts of the Scriptures, or the eternity of punishment, or the Messianic prophecies, renounce these opinions as errors because the Convocation has condemned the book? What effect will this condemnation produce

upon the public opinion of the country? The 'Times' newspaper may be taken as a witness on this point: but I forbear to quote its contemptuous notice of the vote of Convocation. What legal effect will this synodical decision have? Are those clergymen who avowedly hold the condemned opinions thereby disqualified to be ministers or beneficed clergymen of the Church of England? Has this condemnation any force, or has it none? Is it a judicial decision, or a mere theological manifesto? That is, has it any real effect, or none at all?

To this a pointed answer has been given by a very exalted personage in the House of Lords. It is needless that I should do more than refer to the conversation on Lord Houghton's question as to the course the Government intended to take in respect to the proceedings in Convocation. The Lord Chancellor, in a manner which I do not commend, laid down the undoubted law of the land on the powers of Convocation. It is certain beyond controversy that by the 26th of Henry VIII. c. 1, and by the 1st of Elizabeth, c. 1, 17, 18, the Convocation cannot assemble without the Royal writ; nor, when assembled, deliberate without licence; nor, even when licence is granted, deliberate on any matter not expressed or contained in it, nor make any resolutions or constitutions of any sort, without incurring *præmunire*. The law laid down by Lord Westbury is to me evidently correct, and in perfect accordance with all that I ever read, in years past, of the post-Reformation statutes

and the authoritative expositions of them by such writers as Ayliffe, Wake, Stillingfleet, and the like. And I cannot doubt that the proceedings in Convocation were illegal, and in their result to all effects and purposes are null and void. It is this only which will preserve those who partook in them, and everyone who might endeavour to act upon them, from the penalties of *præmunire*. The dilemma is simple. Either the synodical declaration is a judicial act, or it is not. If it be not, then it is waste paper ; if it be, the Convocation is in collision with the Crown in Council. Now, I dismiss all questions of *præmunire*, and all the pleasantries of the learned Lord, in which, most impartially, I have no sympathy. I wish to treat this question in its bearing upon the Church of England, and upon the religious faith and conscience of its members.

For my own part, I believe the Convocation has acted rightly. It has placed itself in direct collision with the Crown in a matter where our Divine Lord has bestowed no power upon any Crown, and all power in heaven and earth upon His Church alone. Do not mistake me. I do not recognise the Church of England as that Church in any part of it ; a belief which, as Dr. Newman has said, nothing but a miracle could reproduce in me. But I place myself in your position for a moment, and view this matter in your light. I think the Convocation has done well. The Civil Power declared that clergymen of the Church of England might teach the matter contained in the

‘Essays and Reviews’ with impunity. The Convocation has declared these ‘teachings to be contrary to the doctrine received by the United Church of England and Ireland, in common with the whole Catholic Church of Christ.’ Beyond all doubt, therefore, no clergyman of the Church of England can teach such doctrine with impunity.

We have here a full and direct variance between the Convocation and the Crown in Council.

Let it be observed that the Convocation does not limit itself to re-affirming the doctrine denied in the ‘Essays and Reviews’ after the manner of the feeble and irrelevant Protest which has lately met with so just a reprobation from Dr. Thirlwall. It declared the teaching of the ‘Essays and Reviews’ to be contrary to the doctrine of the Universal Church ; that is to say, to be false and heretical.

It therefore not only cannot be taught with impunity in the Church of England, but cannot be taught at all by its clergy without violation of their duty. What the Crown in Council permits, the Convocation prohibits. Nor let it be said that by impunity is meant only ‘legal impunity,’—that is, exemption from ecclesiastical proceedings and censures in the courts of law. The Convocation denies to these errors all impunity, all tolerance whatsoever. No opposition can be more point-blank : and nothing less would have saved the Convocation from the just condemnation of paltering with words, and of betraying its convictions.

The Lord Chancellor, after quoting the Acts of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, by which all jurisdiction, spiritual and ecclesiastical, and all power of correcting 'errors, heresies, schisms, &c.,' is annexed and united to the Crown, went on to say, 'Now, if you had ten thousand times the jurisdiction attaching to Convocation, the whole of it would be taken away and annexed to the Crown. It does not remain to you, and for this plain reason—because the Statute of Henry VIII., confirmed by the Statute of Elizabeth, has declared the final charge of all this jurisdiction shall be vested in the Crown. But from you no appeal is given. Now, it is impossible that any body can exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction without an appeal to the Crown. From you there is no appeal. You therefore can exercise no jurisdiction.'* That is to say, the Crown is the last resort, the ultimate judge: all others are inferior,—Westminster Hall after its kind, the Jerusalem-Chamber after its kind. But the creator and ruler of both is the Crown, the sole fountain of all jurisdiction, civil and spiritual, within these realms.

Now it is to this I wish to draw your attention. I do so the more intently, because it is the special point which in the Gorham judgment opened my eyes to the light, in which I have for these thirteen years found the peace and certainty of Divine faith.

Let me make the largest allowances. Let me say

* *Times* newspaper, July 16, 1864.

that by these Tudor Statutes all that is enacted is as follows:—

1. That the Crown should be the fountain of all *jurisdiction*—that is, of all *coercive* power by way of judicial process, *in foro externo*, before the tribunals of public law.

2. That the Crown should have power to judge in the last resort of all ecclesiastical causes, with a view to correct excesses, abuses, or errors in the Ecclesiastical Courts.

3. That the Crown should judge in appeal of all causes relating to benefices and temporal possessions.

4. That the Crown should have the power of judging in appeal of all causes of controverted doctrine, so far as to verify the fact, whether or no the doctrines in contest are *legal*, that is, recognised by law as doctrines of the Established Church.

Let me say, in passing, that I of course do not admit the power of the Crown in such points; but I state them in order to show that what was done in the Gorham case, what has been done in this, and what may be done in every case of appeal on controverted doctrine, goes far beyond all this, and amounts to a power of deciding what doctrines are or are not the doctrines of the Church of England: or in other words, that the Crown is invested with a power to admit or to exclude doctrines upon the exercise of its own *discernment*, all the while disclaiming the power to pronounce them to be *true*, and claiming only to pronounce them to be *legal*.

Now, I conceive, that the Convocation, roused by the enormity of this claim, has pronounced to be false the doctrine which the Crown in Council declares to be legal. If the Crown disclaims the power to discern what is truth, the Convocation assumes the office as the ultimate judge of doctrine in the Church of England. The Convocation has, therefore, withdrawn itself from its Reformation settlement. It is neither under the Tudor Statutes, nor reunited to the Universal Church. It is isolated. It proclaims that the Crown has legalised doctrines contrary to its own teaching, and to the teaching of the Catholic Church of Christ. This is a heavy impeachment, and goes to the root of the whole Tudor legislation. The Royal supremacy is thereby declared to have erred in its judicial character, and the minds of men are driven to review the whole position. They have to examine whether the Royal supremacy has erred now for the first time as an ultimate ecclesiastical judge, or whether it has erred from the beginning in assuming that impossible character, of which this recent error is only the normal and legitimate result.

Whatever distinction there may be between the Establishment and the Church of England, the Church of England is clearly and visibly bound by the jurisdiction of the Crown in Council, and actually submits, though with much ill will, to its decrees. It is unnecessary to waste time upon this, which is self-evident. I will therefore go deeper, and show that the Church of England, and not the Crown in Council, nor any

legal tribunal, is the ultimate and true source of all these violations of Christian doctrine, and that the Crown in Council is only accidentally responsible for them.

To do this, I must recall you to the facts of the case.

The Church of England at the Reformation established itself upon two bases: the one, its independence of all spiritual jurisdiction upon earth; the other, its sufficiency to itself for the preservation and declaration of doctrine, and for the termination of all controversies and questions within its own limits—that is, without appeal beyond the four seas, or to the Church throughout the world.

And yet, while claiming this power of ultimate determination, it did not claim to do so with infallibility, or a divine guidance, or divine certainty in its decisions. It even rejected formally and in terms the idea of such a divine and infallible guidance, not only in itself, but in any body upon earth, and built itself upon the sand, that is, upon the processes of human and historical evidence.

I cannot, therefore, blame the tribunal which has recognised the ‘Essays and Reviews,’ for it is the offspring of the Reformation. The claim of supremacy and of final determination in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, is a primary principle of the Anglican system. It has been accepted, and even clamorously affirmed, by the Anglican Church. The appellate jurisdiction of the Crown in all causes—whether under the

form and title of the Court of Delegates or of the Privy Council, in principle is all the same. Its machinery may vary, but the thing is identical. I notice this only to preclude an objection which is without force or weight.

Neither do I blame the writers of the book in question, that is, for using the liberty granted to them by the Church of England. As to the heresies which they have published, I have no words too keen and strong to condemn their falsehood and impiety. But for the writers I have a sincere compassion. They have done no more than Anglicanism has taught them to do. The Reformation placed them upon the inclined plane. They have but obeyed the law of their position.

The real culprit is the Anglican system, which generates the heresies which the tribunals only legalise. The Crown in Council does not create any new doctrine, nor even pronounce upon its truth. It waits passively until Anglicanism shall have cast up, from its perpetual agitations, some disputed question, and then, with the calmness of an examination post mortem, it dissects the Anglican system, its formularies and its history, to see if there be anything to exclude the new forms of thought which it has engendered. It does not pretend to pronounce them to be true: sometimes it even deplores them with a dignified surprise and regret. It only declares them to be not punishable. It gives them impunity, and legal establishment within the Anglican Church. The true source

and fountain of all these multitudinous errors, contradictions, heresies, is Anglicanism—the Anglican Church, with its three hundred years of multiplying aberrations from Christianity, and its essential rationalism in practice and in principle. And this is the point I would dwell upon. But first let me notice two consequences of the system and position which Anglicanism has thus made or accepted for itself.

The first is, that it has two classes of doctrines: first, those which it believes to be true; and next, those which, though not true, are legal. Both true and false are equally legal, and equally taught in its name; and the teachers of the false doctrines are equally benefitted, and often more dignified, than the teachers of the true.

The second consequence is, that there is in the Anglican system a tribunal which has it always in its power to inundate the Establishment with new doctrines, avowedly not true, but only legal. This tribunal commands the established religion as a water-gate commands a plain country. At any moment the hand of a man may turn it, and the country is laid under water. Multiply appeals, and you multiply new doctrines. Every generation throws out its own forms of error, and the Crown in Council declares them to be legal.

It is in vain to say that this tribunal is not the Church of England. No; but it legalises the errors which the Church of England generates, and the Church of England neither condemns the error nor

the tribunal. It could not if it would. Must I add, it would not if it could? And that because it is only obeying the law of its nature. To make this evident, we have only to take its own documents and its own history.

My object, then, in what follows, is to show that the recent Act of the Convocation, heartily as I commend it for its intention, is absolutely without force or effect. It is null and void, both in law and in conscience. It has no legal effect, as the Lord Chancellor has too abundantly demonstrated. It has no spiritual effect on the intellect or conscience of England, because the Convocation is incapable, even by a unanimous decision, of affording a motive of divine, or even of human certainty. It cannot assure the members of the Church of England that its decisions are true. It can but give a human judgment, even on matters of revealed faith; and, therefore, it can generate in the minds of men only a fallible opinion. I must go even further, and affirm that the principles by which the Convocation proceeds, and those on which the Anglican system is founded, are ultimately rationalistic; though the good providence of God has in England until now restrained their legitimate development. To prove this, I must enter upon some details.

I. Anglicans acknowledge readily that Protestantism is essentially rationalistic, but deny that Anglicanism is Protestant. What I wish to show is, that Anglicanism is identical in principle with all other forms of

the Protestant Reformation. At one and the same time, and by one and the same movement, the Reformation sprung up in Germany, Switzerland, France, Scotland, and England. It took the form of Lutheranism, Zuinglianism, Calvinism, Presbyterianism, and Anglicanism. But these were no more than five aspects of one and the same movement. The names and the forms varied with the country in which they arose. In Germany, Switzerland, and France, it took the impression of the character of its authors. In Scotland, it was democratic and rigid; in England, aristocratic and conservative. For this reason it became episcopal and ceremonial. But the essence of all is one and the same, and their ultimate principles are identical. I will mention only three of them.

1. First, all these five forms of the Reformation alike appeal *from* the living voice of the Church. They all alike reject its divine and infallible authority. It matters not *to* what they appeal—whether to Scripture, or to Fathers, or to antiquity, or to the undivided Church, as they say, before the separation of the East and West, or to General Councils in the past or in the future; for all these are but so many forms and pleas of evasion to cover the essence of their insubordination, which consists in this—the refusal of the living voice of the Church as the rule of faith. For example, if a subject refuse submission to the sovereign power, and appeal to Parliaments in the past, or Princes in the future, nobody would care for the tribunal to which he appeals. To refuse obedience to the

sovereign is treason. Such an act would be a capital offence. So it is with the Church. There can be no appeal from its voice without a denial of the law ; 'He that heareth you heareth me.'

2. Again, all these five forms of fragmentary Christianity alike affirm the sufficiency of Holy Scripture. The sixth of the Thirty-nine Articles declares as follows:—'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith.'

But this is to exclude the living voice and witness of the Church. And if so, who is to decide what is contained in the Holy Scripture, what is to be read therein, or to be proved thereby? If the Church be not the sole ultimate judge of the contents of Holy Scripture, then it must be the individual ; that is, each one for himself. But this is naked Protestantism, or, as we shall see hereafter, essential rationalism.

3. Again, all these five forms of the Reformation alike proclaim a reform in doctrine. They profess to have purified the teaching of the Church : but this assumes that it was corrupted ; and to have rejected additions made by man : but this denies the divine immutability of the faith. The pretension to recall the teaching of the Church to primitive purity assumes for Anglicanism what it denies to the whole Church—a higher discernment of truth.

In these three principles all forms of the Reforma-

tion are identical. They all alike appeal from the living Church, affirm the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and profess to reform the doctrines of faith. And Anglicanism is perhaps the most obtrusive in its claim to a special purity and primitiveness in its system.

Now in this procedure, and in these pretensions, Anglicanism is either divinely and therefore infallibly guided, or it is not. If it be, how is it that the Anglican system is at variance not only with the Catholic Church throughout the world, but with the Greek Church, with which it endeavours in vain to make common cause—with every other form of Protestantism, which it condemns as untenable—at variance also with itself, with its past and its present, forasmuch as it is divided against itself? These are not the operations or the signs of a divine teacher. But if it be not infallible, then its basis is but human; and if so, rationalistic, for there is nothing intermediate between divine faith and human opinion. But we are not left to argue this alternative; the Anglican Church has decided for itself.

II. To prove this, we need little more than to show from its own books that it formally disclaims all infallibility.

It is remarkable that the Anglican Church, in putting forth the first reformed Prayer-book, continued to use the usual form of words, ‘It appeared good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.’* But in publishing it a second time,

* Wheatley on the Book of Common Prayer, pp. 25, 26.

after a few years, with extensive changes, these words appear no more. It was conscious of their unreality. Since then the Anglican Church has not only never ventured upon any such profession of a divine guidance, but has formally and dogmatically denied its existence in any Church upon earth.

In the 19th Article it declares, ‘As the Churches of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch have erred, so also the Church of Rome hath erred, not only in their living and manner of ceremonies, but also in matters of faith:’ that is to say, all particular Churches not only may err, but have erred; and not only the lesser Churches, but the greater—all the four great patriarchates. If so, certainly the Anglican Church does not arrogate for itself that which it denies to the four great patriarchal Churches of Christendom. If they may err and have erred, how much more the Church of two provinces isolated from all the world, and at variance with all the world, and even with itself?

But this is to deny the existence of any divine—that is, infallible—voice on earth. For the Church universal was once made up of these patriarchal or particular Churches. By union they made one, as many stars make a constellation; but in the Anglican theory they are now disunited, and all are fallible. There is, therefore, no collective Church at this time through which the divine voice speaks to us with infallible certainty of truth. The Church universal is dissolved into its separate parts, and has no corporate unity of speech or action.

There is no such voice to be heard: and for want of it men are turning to the right hand and to the left, that is, into every error that lies out of the way of faith. The Universal Church, then, no longer exists as the ultimate witness for truth. The light is put under a bushel, for it is no more seen. The City seated on a hill is hid, for it is no more visible. And what is more, the office of the Holy Ghost in the body of the Church is suspended. He does not speak through the Universal Church, for it is divided; nor through particular Churches, for they are liable to err.

The result of this is inevitable and self-evident. If there be no divine or infallible witness, then the highest and last certainty for the faith of Jesus Christ is only human. The Anglican system has shut itself up within its own circle, and has proclaimed its own sufficiency. By the 24th Henry VIII., the Act by which the schism was accomplished, the Anglican Church isolated itself from the whole Christian world, and rejected the guidance and ultimate appeal to the Universal Church. It thereby erected its own judgment in the place of the divine witness and discernment of the whole Church. The consequences of this were immediate and fatal.

The highest ordinary authority in the Anglican Church is its Episcopate. But it was never yet heard that an Episcopate of two provinces separated from the Universal Church is infallible. And the Anglican Episcopate does not so much as claim or believe

in its own infallibility. Its bishops, one by one, whether in person or by their tribunals, are abundantly fallible; for, if Patriarchates may err, much more Episcopal Sees. But from them the appeal lies to the Crown in Council. I need not discuss the fallibility of a tribunal which disclaims even to judge of the truth of the matter brought before it. But it may be thought that the whole Episcopate united in Convocation has a higher assistance, and a divine direction. But here, also, the Anglican system is inexorable against itself. In the 21st Article it declares that ‘General Councils may err, and sometimes have erred, in things pertaining to God.’ But if General Councils may err, much more Convocations. Yet this is the ultimate and highest certainty for doctrine in the Anglican Church. Water cannot rise above its source. The Anglican Reformation resolves itself into the human authority from which it sprung.

III. What has been already said is enough to show that the Anglican system can afford no divine certainty in its judgments or declarations of doctrine. But to make this more evident, it is well to examine the basis upon which it avowedly rests itself. The professed foundation of Anglicanism is Holy Scripture, but the real foundation is the critical reason. The ultimate certainty upon which it rests even the Scripture, its authenticity, interpretation, inspiration, is a human, and therefore a fallible, tradition.

To prove this, it is enough to quote the Sixth Article, in which it is said that ‘In the name of Holy

Scripture we do understand those canonical books of the Old and New Testament of whose authority was never any doubt in the Church.'

Now, if it be meant whereof there was never any doubt *by* the Church, it is true, because the Church never doubts as to any matter either of faith or of its divine deposit. It knows what books are canonical with a supernatural and infallible certainty. But this would go too far for Anglicanism, which has rejected several books held by the Catholic Church to be canonical. In publishing a new and amended catalogue of Canonical Books, the Church of England has destroyed its own foundation, by placing itself, not upon the divine witness of the Church, but upon the authority of mere historical evidence tried by criticism. If by 'never any doubt *in* the Church,' it means by individuals, it is untrue, because the Epistle to the Hebrews, the 2nd of St. Peter, the 2nd and 3rd of St. John, and the Apocalypse, have been doubted, though by no names of weight. Anglicanism, therefore, rests the whole of Scripture, its authenticity, inspiration, and text, upon historical evidence; that is, upon a human and fallible authority. Dr. Lushington appears to me to have rightly enunciated and applied this fact. He said in his judgment, 'The passage (of Dr. Williams) goes on to speak of the necessity of our assuming in ourselves a verifying faculty. What is the true meaning of these words? I apprehend it must mean this: that the Clergy (for I speak of them only) are at liberty to reject parts of Scripture upon

their own opinion that the narrative is internally incredible, to disregard precepts in Holy Writ because they think them evidently wrong. Whatever I may think as to the danger of the liberty so claimed, still if the liberty do not extend to the impugning of the Articles of Religion or the Formularies, the matter is beyond my cognizance;* that is, as official of the Archbishop of Canterbury in the highest spiritual Court.

Again, for the interpretation of Scripture it can use no higher than human criticism. In the 20th Article it says, 'The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in matters of faith.' But what authority? divine or human? If divine, this is a claim to infallibility, which Anglicanism has so often and so formally rejected. If human, it can bind no man to believe in its decisions; for no man can be under obligation to make an act of faith in a teacher who may err.

It says moreover, 'But yet it is not lawful for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God's word written: neither may it expound one place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.'† A wholesome counsel to all men, but not needed certainly by a divine teacher. But who is to be the judge of their repugnance? and who is to determine the true meaning of Scripture? Suppose the Anglican Church in Convocation to declare the sense of the passages which relate to the eternity of punishment: do such

* Judgment of Court of Arches, June 25, 1862, p. 19.

† Article xx.

declarations carry a divine certainty, and require the submission of the reason and conscience of its members; or are they still at liberty to exercise their critical faculty to accept or to reject such declarations? Undoubtedly, they are still free to revise all judgments of a teacher who disclaims infallibility. It says in the same Article, that the Church is the 'witness and keeper of Holy Writ.' But its testimony and guardianship are of no great avail; for according to the late judgment, though it is not permitted to any clergyman of the Church of England to deny the inspiration of the whole of any book of Scripture; because that would erase it from the Canon, and the list thereby would be mutilated; yet it is lawful to all to deny any portion of any book, so long as any part of it remains; because the name of the book would still stand in the Canon. Nevertheless, as it is permitted to anyone to deny any part of any or of all the books of the Old and New Testament, the whole of Scripture may therefore be denied with impunity, and a universal doubt cast upon the whole of the sacred books. For example, let me suppose that two or more of the Anglican Clergy should deny different parts of the same book, the whole book might be denied by both or by all together, though not by each alone. A doubt may thus be cast upon the authenticity of the whole Bible. Suppose the one to deny the beginning, another the end of any book: or some books to be doubted by some, others by others, until the whole is called into doubt. Nobody would singly deny the whole of Scripture,

nor the whole of any book; but no book and no part of any book is safe from the scepticism of the critical reason, and the whole Bible, on which Anglicanism rests itself, may gradually be treated as Dr. Colenso has treated the Pentateuch and the Psalms.

The result of this is inevitable latitudinarianism and indifference. Contradiction of doctrine and negation of the inspired books is thereby permitted by law; and not only so, but taught in the name of the Anglican Church by its ministers and bishops. Now I cannot charge the fault of this upon the Establishment, but upon the Church of England. The Crown in Council is comparatively innocent. The true and guilty cause of these multiplying errors is Anglicanism, which has denied the divine voice of the Church, and erected itself in the confidence of its human discernment and historical criticism. No system but one that is essentially rationalistic could tolerate the presence of heresies: for where there is a divine certainty, there can be no toleration of error; but when the authority is only human, it is not only a necessity, but a duty, to tolerate all forms of human opinion.

And now do not be displeased, my dear Friend, if I go on to say some things which will seem hard.

IV. The rationalistic character of the Church of England may be further abundantly proved by the fact that for three hundred years it has been in a perpetual oscillation, generating new opinions which act and react upon each other. Contrast with this the last

three hundred years of the Catholic Church since the Council of Trent. It has maintained throughout the world a uniform and unchanging sameness. The same faith, the same theology, unites together nations the most adverse in race, language, civilisation,—races the most repugnant, often at war with each other, always divided in political interests—one, nevertheless, in all that pertains to faith. Compare this with the instability and variations of the Anglican system, which is divided in itself and against itself; so that it condemns its own past as much as the future will condemn the present. What can better illustrate the contrast of St. Paul between the unity and stability of the one Body and one Spirit, by the power of the Holy Ghost, who guides the pastors in perfecting the body of Christ, and the division and instability of those who are carried about with every wind of doctrine by the influence of human teachers?*

I cannot write a history of the variations of Anglicanism: it must suffice to enumerate them. In Edward VI.'s time it was Protestant, and in sympathy with the foreign reformers. In Elizabeth's, it became Hierarchical, and began once more to teach a doctrine of sacramental grace. In the time of the Stuarts, it Romanised more or less: Popery and Prelacy were looked upon as one and the same; they who called the Roman Church Babylon, called Anglicanism its eldest daughter.

* Ephes. iv. 4—16

Under William III. it became Latitudinarian. It made common cause with the Dissenters. Archbishop Tillotson and Bishop Law doubted of eternal punishment; Bishop Hoadley was believed to be Socinian.

Under the Georges it became formalistic and dead. Then it swung back into Puritanism, which was a blind testimony to the interior life in an age when Christianity seemed gone from the hearts of men.

Then came the Evangelical movement—a worthy and manly effort of those who knew a few truths to obey those truths as far as they knew them.

Then followed the Oxford or Romanising movement, which for some years carried all before it; and next, by a proportionate reaction, the Rationalistic School, of which the ‘Essays and Reviews’ are a legitimate fruit, and Dr. Colenso the offspring.

No words will more exactly express what I feel on this subject than the following, in which I beg you not to consider the plainness of speech to imply bitterness on my part:—‘During the eighteen centuries of its existence, the Catholic Church has been tried by the rise of a succession of heresies within its unity. Every century has had its characteristic heresy. From Gnosticism to Jansenism there is a line of almost unbroken succession in error, which has sprung up parasitically by the side of the Divine Truth. But the Church remained stedfast and resplendent, without change or shadow of vicissitude, ever the same, and perfect in its light as in the beginning.

The errors of the human intellect have never fastened upon the supernatural intelligence of the mystical body; but every successive error has been expelled by the vital and vigorous action of the infallible mind and voice of the Church of God. All its dogmas of faith remain to this hour incorrupt, because incorruptible, and therefore primitive and immutable. The errors of men have been cast forth as humours which are developed in the human system, but cannot co-exist with the principle of life and health. A living body casts off whatever assails its perfection. "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us, but that they might be manifest that they were not all of us." * But in the Anglican Church all is the reverse. Every error which has sprung up in it, adheres to it still. Its doctrines vanish, its heresies abide. All its morbid humours are absorbed into its blood. The Lutheranism of Edward VI., the Hierarchical Calvinism of Elizabeth, the Ceremonial Arminianism of James, the Episcopalian Antiquarianism of the two Charleses, the Latitudinarianism of William III., the Formalism and the Fanaticism of the Georges, the Anglo-Catholicism and the Rationalism of the last thirty years, all coexist at this hour, side by side congested together, in open contradiction, and almost perpetual controversy. It would be untrue to represent any one of these

* St. John, ii. 19.

schools of error as the legitimate voice or exponent of the Anglican Church. They are all equally so, and all equally not so. They each claim so to be, and deny the legitimacy of all the rest. But the Anglican Church pronounces no judgment among them. It sits mute and confounded. It puts none of them out of its pale. None of them will go out. All alike refuse to be put out, for all are equally of it, and all, therefore, by the inspired rule, alike remain with it. And this for the obvious reason already given, which to any Catholic is intuitively clear: forasmuch as the Anglican Reformation has entirely cancelled from the intelligence of the English people the whole idea of the Church divinely founded, endowed with supernatural attributes, and teaching with divine, and, therefore, infallible certainty, there is neither any principle of authority, or test of certainty by which to discern truth from error, nor any frontier or circle of unity from which error should be expelled. I believe the universal experience of all those who have exercised the Evangelical ministry in England would be this—that the last article of the Creed, which enters, and that slowly, and for a long time painfully, into the English intelligence, is the nature and office of the Church: or, to speak theologically, the formal object of faith, and the divinely-ordained conditions of its manifestations to the world.*

These, in the fewest words, are the reasons why

* Sermons on Ecclesiastical Subjects, Preface, pp. 56–8.

I must acquit the Crown in Council, and find the Church of England guilty of the heresies taught in the 'Essays and Reviews.' It has no power to condemn them, for they are its own legitimate offspring. The unlimited license of thought which has prevailed since the schism of Henry VIII. has borne its natural fruit. And its act of condemnation carries no divine certainty. It is no more than an act of human judgment, and human opinion, contrary indeed to the 'Essays and Reviews,' but within the same sphere, and upon the same level.

During these last thirteen years in which the Church of England has been tossed to and fro by every wind of human error, distracted by judgments of the Crown in Council and by turbulent confusions in Convocation, the Catholic Church has three times met in Synod. It took up its work again after a silence of three hundred years, and reopened its proceedings with a familiarity as prompt and a readiness as calm as if it had resumed to-day the deliberation of last night. Though centuries of time had rolled away since it sat in council, the last Synod in England is but as the session of yesterday to the session of the morrow. Time is not with the Church of God, save as it works in time, and time for it. The prerogatives of the Church, like His from whom they spring, are changeless. Its Episcopate met once more as of old. It had no principles to seek, no theories to invent, no precedents to discover; from the highest obligation to the lowest usage, all is definite and sure. After cen-

turies, the Church puts forth its divine laws and powers, and applies them to the needs of place and time, with the precision of a science and the facility of instinct. What is human stiffens and dies; the living is ever in act as He in whose life the Church lives eternally.

I cannot forbear to quote some of the last words I ever wrote in the Church of England, as they express, though too feebly, what I feel at this day with all the powers of my reason and of my conscience. ‘It has been said that this decision [the Gorham] leaves the doctrine of the Church of England wholly untouched; that it does not alter a letter of its formularies, and that, therefore, the doctrine of the Church is inviolate as ever.

‘This has been said by so many of the highest name and note, as well as by so many who must be “esteemed very highly in love for their work’s sake,” that I am loath to deny it. But truth leaves no freedom. The doctrine of the Church, then, is surely not an assemblage of formularies, but the true meaning of them. Doctrine is not a written, but a living truth. “Prior sermo quam liber; prior sensus quam stylus.” If books were doctrine, no sect could be in heresy so long as it retained the Bible. If creeds were doctrine, the Socinians, who recite the Apostles Creed, must be acquitted. But books and forms without their true interpretation are nothing. Doctrine is defined “univoca docendi methodus.” It is the perpetual living voice of the individual pastors

uniting as one. The Church is the collective teacher, and doctrine is the oral exposition of the faith. Will anyone say that this is not touched by legalising the denial of an article of the Creed? The doctrine of the Church of England is not only its written formularies, but the oral teaching of its twenty-eight bishops, its fifteen thousand clergy, its many more thousand school-teachers, and its two or three millions of heads of families. Doctrine is the living, ever-spreading, and perpetual sense which is taught at our altars and from house to house all the year round. If this be so, it seems to me to be a dream to say that the doctrine of the Church is untouched. For what is the effect of the latitude given by the late sentence of the Crown? To those who believe truth to be divine, that the authority of God is in every article of faith, and that our contradictions are His dishonour, it inspires alarm to hear from such authorities that the late sentence has not touched the doctrine of the Church. Would the legalising of Arianism after the Nicene Council, leaving the Nicene Creed to stand in words, have touched the doctrine of the Church? Would legalising Sabellianism touch doctrine so long as the words of our formularies are unchanged? If the answer be yes, I ask why? The formularies are still unaltered: the faithful may teach the Nicene doctrine. Lastly, I would ask, How shall we stand the test of our own standards? By the definition of the Church of England, "the visible Church is a con-

gregation of faithful men in which the pure Word of God is preached.”’ *

It is almost incredible that a writer in the ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ should have noted with satisfaction that the Gorham judgment legalised in the Church of England one school of doctrine, and that this late judgment has legalised another. It is like rejoicing that two mortal diseases have been established in the body of a dying man. Such an opinion demonstrates the absence of all faith in the Church as a Witness, Judge, and Teacher.†

No other words of mine will better express this divine office, than the following which were spoken in the last Provincial Synod of Westminster.

* The Appellate Jurisdiction of the Crown in Matters Spiritual, pp. 35–37, 2nd edition, Murray, 1850.

† The following passages from the ‘*Edinburgh Review*’ read like irony:—

‘. . . . The Gorham judgment—the Magna Charta, as it has been truly called, of the liberties of the English Church. . . . As the Gorham judgment established beyond question the legal position of the Puritan, or so-called Evangelical party, in the Church of England; as the Denison judgment would, had it turned on the merits of the case, instead of a technical flaw, have established the legal position of the High Church or Sacramental party; so the judgment in the case of Mr. Wilson and Dr. Williams established the legal position of those who have always claimed the right of free inquiry and latitude of opinion, equally for themselves and for both the other sections of the Church.’—*Edinburgh Review*: The Three Pastorals. July, 1864. No. 245. pp. 270–2.

So that the only party which is not legalised is the so-called Anglo-Catholic. A strange reverse of position for those who the other day claimed, and were thought, to be the only true English Churchmen.

‘When the Holy Ghost, on the day of Pentecost, descended upon the Apostles, the mind of God was unfolded to them. They became the witnesses of the mysteries which are hid in God: they were partakers of His thoughts, and depositories of His intentions. Then arose within them the living consciousness of the truth, which has descended lineally in the mystical body to this hour; the divine tradition of the light of Pentecost, in which all the revelation of God hangs suspended in its symmetry and perfection. For what is the Church, but the Apostolic college prolonged and expanded in its organisation and unity throughout the world, wherein the mind of the Spirit has descended to us through the perpetual indwelling of the Holy Ghost? He preserves what He has revealed, and perpetually proposes to the world the truth which in the beginning He shed abroad upon the intelligence of man. The Church, then, is not a name of multitude, but of a supernatural unity, the head and the body, Christ mystical, of which the Holy Ghost is the life, soul, and mind.

‘The Church is, as St. Augustine says, “*una quædam persona*,” “*unus perfectus vir*,” or, as the Apostle says, “the spiritual man, who judgeth all things, and himself is judged of no man.” It is the fountain and the channel of light to the world; the expositor of the law and the interpreter of the truth of God. The law of God, expounded and applied in its fullness and minuteness to the souls of men within the sphere of its jurisdiction, constitutes the wonderful science of

law which the legislation of the Church is perpetually elaborating. The truth of God, interpreted by the Holy Spirit, and disposed in order and harmony, constitutes the highest science of which the reason of man is capable—that is Theology, of which both the author and the object is God. But the legislator and the interpreter of these divine sciences is the Spirit of God, from whom truth and law both alike proceed. Such thoughts as these are seasonable at a time like this. All things around us draw our minds this way. The solemn invocations of the Holy Ghost are still lingering in our ears. A Synod of the Church in England, the representative of the spiritual sway of Calcyth, Finchal, Oxford, Herudford, London, and Westminster, is gathered here. It is a Council of Westminster once more. We see here the evidence of the undying life and ever-renewing power of the Church of God, calmly legislating from age to age; restoring, re-creating, what time or the sin of man has destroyed, as the exuberant life of nature perpetually re-ascends, full and ready to clothe again with fertility the bare earth which has been scathed and torn. For more than a thousand years the Church in England has witnessed for the same changeless faith. Through all vicissitudes of time and state, through sun or storm, it has spoken with one unfaltering voice. What it taught by St. Augustine it teaches now. The history of St. Bede is the transcript of the Church of God in England at this hour; and the

Church of this hour is the history of St. Bede, breathing and living still. There we see the same filial reverence and dutiful submission to the successor of St. Peter, the same divine sacrifice upon the altar, the same sacrament of penance, the same affectionate intercession for the souls purifying in the fire of God's love,—above all, the same invocation of the saints, the same loving worship of the Mother of God. A thousand years passed away, and the same Hierarchy stood in witness and in suffering for the same mind of the Spirit. In the face of princes and the powers of this world—in despite of mockery and slander, of tortures and of martyrdom—the Catholic Hierarchy of England witnessed, till by violence it was swept away from the earth.

‘Three centuries again are gone, and the same truths are still living and fresh in the heart of the changeless Church. They are before us at this moment; the same dutiful and loving obedience binds this Council to the Apostolic See.’*

There were no controversies about Articles of the Creed, or about the inspiration of Holy Scripture, or of eternal punishment, to be declaimed about in that Synod. Had there been a question of doctrine or of its interpretation, the Universal Church, upon which the Catholic Church in England rests, would solve it with a tranquil and divine certainty. ‘*Securus judicat orbis terrarum.*’

* Sermons on Ecclesiastical Subjects, pp. 117–120.

And the decree of a Provincial Council of Westminster confirmed by the Holy See would afford an infallible rule of faith, as the Provincial Councils of Africa did with the confirmation of S. Innocent I in the condemnation of the Pelagian heresy.*

But it is now more than time to make an end. I will, therefore, sum up what I have written. These late proceedings have laid bare once more, as the Gorham Appeal did through God's mercy to me some fourteen years ago, that the Statute 26th Henry VIII. was a violation of the divine office and unity of the Church. It cut the local Church of England from the Universal Church, and from that hour it forfeited its participation in the perpetual illumination and assistance of the Holy Spirit of God, whereby the original revelation is preserved and propounded in all ages whole and immutable. In that hour it lost as a body the tradition and gift of divine faith. The Christianity of England from that hour has rested upon a historical basis, on human criticism and the balance of probabilities. Protestants appeal to the inspired books of the Old and New Testaments; Anglicans appeal also to the uninspired books of the Fathers; but the principle and process are identical in both. It is historical and critical, and generates only opinion or human faith. The distinction be-

* Melchior Cani Opera. Lib. v. c. iv. 5. Bellarm. De Conciliorum auctor. Lib. ii. c. v. . . . Certè temerarium, erroneum, et proximum hæresi est, existimare, Concilia particularia a Pontifice confirmata posse errare.

tween reason and faith is thus obscured, and the generic difference between the last act of reason and the first act of faith, so far as my experience, which is not now little or superficial, is effaced from the mind of most Anglicans. Reason leads us to the feet of a Divine Teacher ; but thenceforward His voice, and not our balancing of probabilities, will be the formal motive of our faith. Historical criticism teaches us that Christianity has penetrated the nations of the world for eighteen hundred years, united them in one family, elevated the intellect and purified the heart of mankind, created the new Christian civilisation, taught immutably one dogma, and reigned inflexibly by one divine law : that its unity and universality fulfil the prophecies, and that the multitude of its martyrs, saints, and penitents attest a supernatural power. The cumulus of evidence and the ever-growing weight of probabilities determine the reason imperatively to believe that Christianity is a divine revelation, and the Church a divine kingdom upon earth. But there is a truth which arises out of this order and sphere of truths which predominates over all and draws all to itself. The same evidence which tells me that the Church had a Divine Founder, tells me that it is at this hour inhabited by a Divine Person—that the witness and voice of the Church is not only human and historical, but also supernatural and divine. The maximum of probabilities passes upward into the Divine certainty, as the taper which leads

me up out of the windings of a catacomb passes away into the blaze of the sun at noon-day. My faith terminates no longer in a cumulus of probabilities gathered from the past, but upon the veracity of a Divine Person guiding me with His presence. The Universal Church is His dwelling-place and the organ of His voice. It is immutable in its doctrine, because He sustains it in every age incorrupt, primitive, and changeless. So long as I submit to that Church, and through it my faith terminates in the person and voice of the Holy Spirit of God, so long, by an act of divine faith, I infallibly know the revelation of the day of Pentecost. In the hour I fall from the Church, in that hour I lose the divine certainty of faith, and descend to the region of criticism and opinion. In like manner, in the hour the Church of England fell from the unity of the Church throughout the world, it lost the illumination of divine faith and the tradition of divine and infallible certainty. In that hour the Crown took it captive, and till this day it has been in bondage. Its claims are heavy, though they be of gold: and dearly it has paid for its fault in the spiritual atrophy of three hundred years, and the confusions which are dissolving it before our eyes. My dear Friend, let no one who has ever looked upon me with kindness, think I write with bitterness or with the heart of an adversary. God knows it is not so. But I feel so vividly the miseries I once endured while I was in the house of bondage, and I see so intensely the dishonour which Anglicanism has done and is

doing to the Name and Person of our Divine Lord, that I cannot temper my words or turn the edge of truth. I rejoice to see the Convocation openly and deliberately standing for the doctrines denied in the 'Essays and Reviews,' and condemning as false the errors legalised by a tribunal which does not derive itself either from God or from His Church. I trust none who have so far stood firm will falter. Better a thousand times to suffer the spoiling of goods, and to stand before the Lord High Chancellor, to use his courtly words, even 'in sackcloth and ashes,' than so much as to keep silence when the heresies of the 'Essays and Reviews' are declared to be admissible in any society of Christians. '*Judex damnatur cum nocens absolvitur.*' I am sure that the hearts of all honest and good men, and I am sure mine most warmly and firmly, would be with Archbishop Longley, in the day when for such a cause he should stand before Lord Westbury. But this will not be. I look for no organic changes in the Church of England, but a gradual wasting away, by multiplying aberrations of its teachers and its people. The law of its dissolution is working in it irresistibly.

One effect of this last judgment of the Crown is certain. It has revealed more and more the absence of all discernment, certainty, and authority in the Church of England, whether in its Episcopate or its Convocations. No one looks to either as to an ultimate and final judge invested with the conditions of a supernatural office, or as to an organ of divine certainty

in the matter of doctrine or of faith. The question is being pushed to its last analysis. The alternative before the present generation is no longer Anglo-Catholicism or Roman Catholicism, but between Rationalism and Christianity; that is, Rationalism or Rome. It is certain that the Anglo-Catholicism of the Oxford movement threw out, by reaction, the rationalism of the 'Essays and Reviews.' It is certain that the Rationalistic School, now in the ascendant, will throw out a far more thorough approximation to Catholicism in all its amplitude. The alternative is self-evident: either the human certainty of history and criticism, or the divine certainty of Catholic tradition; either the human reason as a critic testing the doctrines of revelation, or the human reason as a disciple submitting to the voice of a Divine Person, the Author and Teacher of the Faith.

Believe me, my dear Friend,

Always affectionately yours,

HENRY EDWARD MANNING.

BAYSWATER: *July 25, 1864.*

